

Gremlins!

Steven Spielberg's newest little darlings are not as cuddly as they look, but they are TV WEEK readers!

"If they could speak English," says movie maestro Steven Spielberg of the title characters of his latest movie Gremlins, "they'd probably say: 'Let's party'."

"It's how they party that can be hazardous to your health."

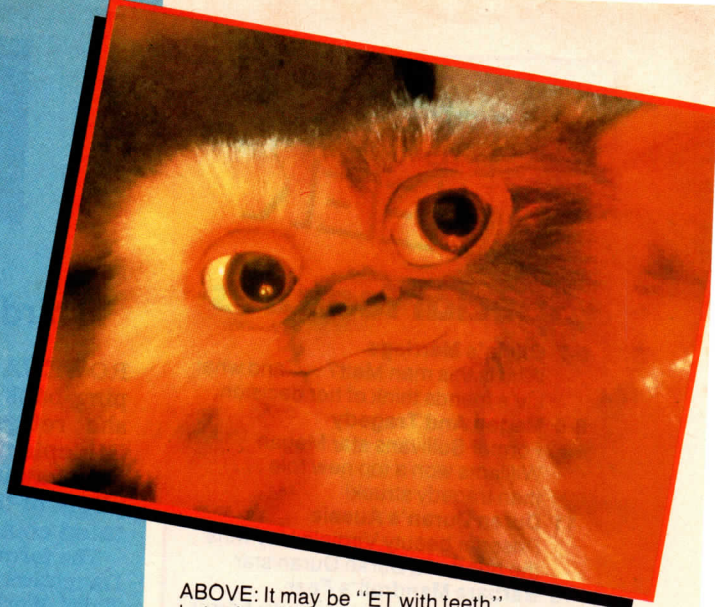
The little mogwai creatures which feature in the movie turn out to be not quite as cute and cuddly as they first appear and, in fact, wreak utter havoc in the film's setting, the imaginary township of Kingston Falls, a dreamscape of mid-America.

Says Time magazine: "Gremlins is a movie with a simple game

RIGHT: Phoebe Cates, one of the human stars of Gremlins, appears comfortable with the creatures which are guaranteed to "scare you silly".

BELOW: And they're discerning little critters!





ABOVE: It may be "ET with teeth", but at least this Gremlin looks just as cute as the previous Steven Spielberg creation.

plan — it wants to scare you silly. This is no idle threat."

And one of the movie's stars, Hoyt Axton, the singer-songwriter whose screen credits include *The Black Stallion* and *Endangered Species*, describes Gremlins as "ET with teeth".

Spielberg, however, does not like the comparison with *ET*, his 1982 movie which smashed all box office records, and says he would not have worked on the new film had there been similarities.

"It's the most bizarre project I have ever been associated with, but one of which I'm very proud," he says.

Spielberg, who was one of three executive producers of *Gremlins*, bought the rights to the script from former film student Chris Columbus after seeing a 20-minute short, called *Gizmo*, which Columbus had made.

An unsuccessful inventor named Rand Peltzer (Axton) brings home a furry mogwai for his 20-year-old bank clerk son Billy (19-year-old New York actor Zack Galligan) to keep as a pet.

Billy names the little creature Gizmo and is delighted with his new pet, which comes with a variety of instructions: keep him away from water; keep him out of light; and most importantly, no matter how much he begs, never feed him after midnight.

Inevitably, those rules get broken and, in this movie, that's where the inevitability stops.

Gizmo's offspring start to appear at a rapid rate and, to give you some idea of what follows, *Time* describes them as looking and acting "like Muppets re-born as Hell's Angels".

But it's not all shock-horror and, in fact, director Joe Dante has managed to inject some dark humor beneath the surface of the story.

As you can see, on the opposite page, mogwais can't be all that nasty... they read *TV WEEK*! *Gremlins* has its Australian premiere on December 13.